

ABSTRACT

A door trim panel assembly is provided for an automotive vehicle. The panel assembly includes an armrest having an inner edge and an outer edge. The panel assembly also includes an upper panel and a lower panel. The upper panel has a support wall for supporting the inner edge of the armrest. The support wall has a distal end. The lower panel includes a support flange for supporting the outer edge of the armrest. The support flange has a distal end. A frangible connection extends between the distal ends of the support wall and the support flange. The armrest includes a plurality of longitudinally extending grooves. During a side vehicle impact, the grooves allow the armrest to deform transversely and the frangible connection breaks to absorb energy associated with the impact.